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FOURTEENTH STUDY.—THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON.*

[This "study" is prepared by Rev. J. L. Hurlbut, D. D., Plainfield, New Jersey. It is edited by Professor Harper.]

1. **The Development of the Temple Idea.** (1) The germ of the Temple was the *Altar*, the earliest institution of worship, Gen. 4:3,4; 8:20. This was regarded as the meeting-place between God and man, with an offering to express atonement for sinners. Wherever the patriarchs encamped, they built an altar of rough, unhewn stones, Gen. 12:6-8; 26:25. This material was employed for the altar throughout Israelite history, Exod. 20:24,25. The stone was piled up to give it form, but the true altar was the earth within it.
- (2) An advance was made when special sanctity was assigned to a *locality*, as Bethel, "the house of God," Gen. 13:3,4; 28:18-22; 35:1-3,6,14,15.
- (3) Both ideas, of a meeting-place with God, and of a dwelling-place for God, were united in the *Tabernacle*; one in the altar, the other in the Holy of holies, Exod. 25:8. The name of this structure was "the tent of meeting," Exod. 29:42-45; 33:7 (R. V.), i. e., the tent where men met with God. Cf. the modern "meeting-house."
- (4) After the Tabernacle found a permanent home at Shiloh, it took on by degrees more of the temple-form. The name "temple" first appears in 1 Sam. 1:9. A substantial building with posts, rooms around it for priests (1 Sam. 3:3), gates (1 Sam. 4:13, see margin R. V.), gradually took the place of (more probably, were built around) the ancient tent.
- (5) The rise of Judah's power under David, and the concentration of worship at Jerusalem, led to the plan of a solid and enduring building. Notice the stages of purpose in 2 Sam. 6:1-12; 7:1-13. A fuller account in 1 Chron. 15-17. The arrangements were made during the close of David's reign, and a store of materials prepared, 1 Chron. 28:11-19; 29:2-8.
2. **The Purpose of the Temple.** (1) To furnish a fitting place for the public worship of God. The services kept Jehovah prominently before the people, and perpetuated and promoted religion. See Ps. 84.
- (2) To symbolize the presence of God among his people. Hence the house, with its holy place, and holy of holies. Other nations had their idols. Israel had its house wherein no image stood, Exod. 20:3,4; Lev. 26:11,12; 2 Chron. 6:1,2.
- (3) To present in symbols the great truths of redemption. These were expressed by the altar and the sacrifices, Lev. 1:1-5; 2 Chron. 7:1-14; Heb.9:22. Much of the epistle to the Hebrews is intended to show the relation between the services of the old covenant and the salvation under the new.
- (4) To strengthen the bond of union among the tribes. For this purpose there was but one Temple and one altar for all the Hebrew world, and all rival shrines were forbidden, Deut. 12:8-14; Josh. 22:10-27. Three times in each year the people gathered from all Israel for worship, Deut. 16:16. Notice the effect of this on the nation, 1 Kgs. 12:26-28.
3. **The Building of the Temple.** (1) *The place*: Its earliest mention is in Gen. 22:1,2,14, though the identity is not certain. Purchased by David, 2 Sam.

* The literature on this topic is voluminous; the reader may consult with profit (1) the article on *The Temple* in Smith's Bible Dictionary; (2) the various commentaries *in loc.*; (3) Geikie's Hours with the Bible, Vol. 3, chap. xvi.; (4) Stanley's History of the Jewish Church, 2d series, chap. xxvii.

24:17-25. 1 Chron. 21:18-30; 22:1. Chosen as the location of the Temple, 2 Chron. 3:1. It is believed that the native rock directly under the Dome of the Rock, misnamed the Mosque of Omar, is the spot where the altar of the Temple stood.

- (2) *The foundation*: In order to provide a place, the summit of the mountain was extended on the southern side overlooking the declivity called Ophel. The platform thus constructed looked down 270 feet (according to Josephus, 450 feet to the valley of the Kedron). Under it were arched chambers, and great cisterns containing 10 million gallons of water. This reservoir was filled by underground aqueducts from Solomon's Pools near Bethlehem. It supplied the Temple, and during sieges, the city. A reference to this may be in Ps. 46:1-5.
 - (3) *The materials*: These were 1) stone, from quarries still to be seen, north of the city. 2) Cedar, with which the house was covered, and of which partitions and roofs were made. See 2 Chron. 2:3-9; 1 Kgs. 6:8-10. 3) Gold and silver, for decorations, 1 Chron. 22:14; 29:4; variously estimated at from 500 million to 5,000 million dollars, according to different valuations of the talent. Obtained by David from the plunder of conquered nations. 4) Brass (perhaps should read *copper*). See the catalogue of brazen utensils and ornaments in 1 Kgs. 7:15-47.
 - (4) *The construction*: Time occupied, see 1 Kgs. 6:1,38. Dedicated eight months after its completion, 1 Kgs. 8:1,2. Built without sound of hammer or chisel, perhaps out of respect for the ancient law, 1 Kgs. 6:7; Deut. 27:5,6. Excavations show that a trench was hewn out of the native rock, in which the lowest course of stone was laid. No chips of stone, or fragments, are found near it, showing that the hewing was done elsewhere.
- 4. The Plan of the Temple.** (1) *Sources of Information*: (a) The two accounts of the building in 1 Kgs. 5-8, and 2 Chron. 3-7. These should be studied carefully. (b) The account of the Tabernacle in Exod. 25-40. Most of the known dimensions of the Temple were twice those of the Tabernacle, and the general plan was the same. Each will help us to reconstruct the other, where figures are not given. (c) Ezekiel's vision of the temple, Ezek. 40-46. Uncertain whether he describes Solomon's or Zerubbabel's Temple, yet the information is of value. (d) Allusions to the Temple after its building, as in 2 Kgs. 11:5-16; 12:9; 16:10-18; 25:13-17; and the parallel passages in 2 Chron. (e) The account of the later Temple (Herod's) as gathered from the references in the New Testament, the tract Middoth in the Mishna, and the description by Josephus, who, however, wrote from memory twenty years after its destruction. (f) Recent investigations, especially those under the auspices of the Palestine Exploration Fund, which have corroborated some opinions, and absolutely refuted others.
- (2) *The departments of the Temple*. These were the Court; the Porch; the Holy Place; the Holy of Holies; the Chambers.
 - (a) *The Court*: This was an unroofed quadrangle, surrounded by a wall, corresponding to the court of the Tabernacle, Exod. 27:9-18. Dimensions unknown, but stated by Josephus to be about 500 feet square, or one-half those of the court of the Gentiles in Herod's Temple. The wall on the eastern side was known in the New Testament period as Solomon's Porch, Jno. 10:23; Acts 3:11; and probably stood as the modern one does, on the ancient

foundation. See allusions to this court in 1 Kgs. 8:64; 2 Chron. 20:5; 24:21. It was divided into two parts, outer and inner, 1 Kgs. 6:36; 2 Chron. 4:9; like the court of Israel and court of the priests in the later Temple. The inner court was higher, and the more sacred, Joel 2:17. In the courts were (1) *The altar*, built of rough stone, and covered with plates of brass or copper. Its dimensions, 2 Chron. 4:1. (2) *The tank* or "sea," made of brass (copper?) and standing on twelve brazen oxen, 2 Chron. 4:2-5. (3) *Ten lavers*, movable water-carriers on wheels, used for washing the sacrifices, 2 Chron. 4:6. Described minutely in 1 Kgs. 7:27-39. (4) As some hold, *a grove of trees*, probably in the outer court, Ps. 52:8; 92:12-14.

- (b) *The Porch*: This was the front or vestibule of the house. It was a tower of stone, covered probably with cedar, nearly 200 feet high, in several stories, and containing rooms for various uses, 2 Chron. 3:4. Its inside measurements were 20 cubits wide, 10 cubits deep and 120 cubits high. Two remarkable pillars, perhaps named after their makers, stood in the entrance. See 1 Kgs. 7:15-22.
- (c) Passing through the Porch, one comes to the *Holy Place*, called in 2 Chron. 3:5, "the greater house." Dimensions (1 Kgs. 6:17) 40×20 cubits. [We may regard the cubit as about 1 foot 8 inches long.] It was in length and breadth twice the dimensions of the same room in the Tabernacle. But we notice several variations from the pattern of the Tabernacle: (1) In place of the golden candlestick, were ten candlesticks or lamp-stands, 2 Chron. 4:7. (2) In place of the table of shew-bread, were ten tables, 2 Chron. 4:8. At each end of the room were double doors, probably in addition to the veil, 1 Kgs. 6:31-33. All of these were changed in the later Temple, which followed more closely the plan of the Tabernacle. In the Holy Place stood also the altar of incense, 1 Kgs. 7:48; 2 Chron. 4:19.
- (d) Beyond the Holy Place was the *Holy of Holies*, called in 1 Kgs. 6:16 "the oracle." This was a cube of 20 cubits in each dimension, 2 Chron. 3:8. It contained two gigantic cherubim of wood, covered with gold, 2 Chron. 3:10-13. Also the ark of the covenant and its contents, 2 Chron. 5:4-10. For a description of the ark see Exod. 25:10-22. In the later Temple this room was entirely empty (except for a marble stone on the floor, on which the blood was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement), as the ark was lost in the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar.
- (e) *The Chambers*: Around the temple building, but separate from it, and on independent walls, were rooms for the priests, occupied during each priest's fortnight of service through the year. They were in three stories; the upper stories larger than the lower, on account of different thickness in the wall, 1 Kgs. 6:5-10; Jer. 36:10; Ezek. 40:45,46; 42:1-6.

The History of Solomon's Temple. 1) The dedication, 2 Chron. 5:1-6:22. 2) The regard for the temple, Ps. 27:4; 43:1-4; 84:1; 132:1-5. 3) Its treasury plundered, under Rehoboam. This involved the loss of all the wealth gathered by David, 2 Chron. 12:9-11. 4) The repairs under Joash, 2 Kgs. 12:4-15. 5) Desecration by Ahaz, 2 Kgs. 16:10-19. 6) Reconsecration by Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 29:1-36. 7) Desecration by Manasseh, 2 Chron. 33:1-18. 8) Purification and repair by Josiah, 2 Chron. 34:1-13,29-33. 9) Final destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Chron. 36:11-21; Jer. 52:12-23.